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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

VOLUME XII  
NUMBER 10

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DECEMBER, 1904

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WHOLE  
NUMBER 120

## WHAT HAS BEEN GAINED IN UNIFORMITY OF COLLEGE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS IN THE PAST TWENTY YEARS?

THE subject assigned me is: "What has been gained in uniformity of college-admission requirements in the past twenty years?" Why twenty years? Because this is the nineteenth annual meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, and for a year previous the work of organizing this Association had been going on. In efforts to obtain uniformity in college-admission requirements this Association has been the prime mover. You know how it has been copied, first in the Middle States and Maryland, and later in other sections of the country; and wherever an association of this sort has been formed the relations between the secondary schools and the colleges have proved to be one of the principal subjects of discussion. At first these associations dealt chiefly with the requirements made for admission examinations; but they subsequently took up the requirements made by colleges and universities that admit on certificate, uniformity being as desirable from the point of view of secondary schools under the certificate system as it is under the examination system.

At the instance of this Association in the first year of its existence, but through the direct action of the Association of Colleges in New England, the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission Examinations was organized in 1886 "to consider and recommend to the several faculties such measures as the Commission may deem expedient to maintain and promote uniformity in the requirements

of admission to college." The first result of the Commission's work was the adoption by most of the colleges of a rule that candidates shall be examined at the preliminary examinations only in those subjects in which their teachers certify that they are prepared and in which they present themselves with their teachers' approval. The Commission also suggested, in its first year, that the following subjects be reserved by all the colleges until the final examinations: Virgil, Latin prose composition, Homer, Greek prose composition, geometry, French, and English composition. This suggestion was in large measure adopted, but did not receive the same degree of approval as the first.

In 1887-88 the Commission adopted a method of inquiry and conference which has had far-reaching effects on American education. It procured conferences on the requirements in English for admission to college, being assisted in this work by a committee of this Association and by a committee of three professors of English from the associated New England Colleges. These conferences and discussions prepared the way for the adoption of common requirements in English, which, with not infrequent modifications, have been since maintained in good measure.

In 1888-89 the Commission discussed the examination in Greek and Roman history and the expediency of separating these two subjects. They also took up the requirements in modern languages, and procured conferences on that subject similar to those which the Commission had previously conducted in regard to the English requirements. The resulting requirements were submitted to the Modern Language Association of America, and there obtained valuable consideration. This subject presented more difficulty than the English requirement, because eight of the colleges represented in the Commission did not then insist on any requirements in modern languages. In the same year the Society of American Naturalists asked the Commission to consider a proposed requirement for admission in natural science; and the Commission listened to arguments by representatives of that society on the following proposal: "An elementary (but genuine and practical) acquaintance with some one or more departments of natural science should be required for admission to college." The Commission, however, abstained from forming

any judgment as to the practicability of requirements in natural science, perhaps because only one of the colleges represented in the Commission was then maintaining such a requirement.

The chief result of the Commission's work thus far was the bringing about of conferences between teachers of secondary schools and representative committees of the associated New England colleges on entrance requirements by departments of study. Such conferences were at that time novel expedients; but they proved to be highly serviceable, and had much more effect in unifying the standards of the different institutions than would appear from the votes of the several faculties on the subjects brought before the conferences.

In 1890 a carefully prepared scheme of requirements in elementary and advanced German and elementary and advanced French resulted from the conference procured by the Commission; and the Commission voted "that the scheme of requirements reported by the committee of instructors in modern languages be transmitted to the several faculties and commended to their consideration." In connection with the requirements in English, the Commission succeeded in introducing the practice that long notice should be given to the schools of changes in admission requirements, whether on examination or by certificate. Thus the Commission issued in September, 1890, a list of English books to be read in the schools in preparation for the examinations of 1894; and finally procured the construction of a six-year list of books to be read in preparation for college.

The fruitfulness of the conference method adopted by the Commission had now become so apparent that in 1892 the Committee of Ten appointed by the National Educational Association to consider secondary-school studies and programs adopted it as their method of inquiry and preliminary study. Nine conferences by subject of delegates from all parts of the country were organized by that committee, and the proceedings of these conferences proved to be the most valuable part of its report.

In 1893 a committee of this Association, whose function it was to confer with the Commission, represented that the requirements of the colleges in Latin and Greek seemed to them and their Association susceptible of improvement; whereupon the Commission appointed a committee to inquire into the present condition of the requirements

in Latin and Greek, with power to call a conference of teachers of Latin and Greek, one in each of these departments from each college, the expense of this conference to be paid by the Commission. In this year the Commission further voted that a committee be appointed to inquire whether a lack of uniformity in other subjects than Latin and Greek is caused by the existing forms of certificates for admission. This was the first appearance before the Commission of the subject of admission on certificate. This year also the Commission voted to hold a conference on the requirements in English with a special committee appointed for the purpose by the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools in the Middle States and Maryland.

In 1894 the committee appointed in the preceding year reported that they had collected and carefully compared the forms of certificates used by the various colleges represented in the Commission, and that, in their judgment, no lack of uniformity in the subjects required for admission is caused by variations in the forms of certificate. "The variations do not result from a difference in the requirements of admission, but from a difference in the methods of certification." This report was accepted. The requirements in German were also considered; but no final action was taken. The Commission received another communication from the committee of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools on the requirements in Latin. The committee desired a wider range of choice in the Latin authors, and further urged that colleges admitting on certificate recommend in the department of Latin what the other colleges prescribe for their examinations. In 1894 the Commission took action as follows:

The Commission having received a committee of the colleges and preparatory schools of the Middle States and Maryland, and having heard them upon the subject of requirements for admission to college in English, with a request that the Commission unite with them in securing uniformity in requirements of English for admission to the colleges in New England and the Middle States and Maryland, therefore voted that a committee of three, to be named by the Chair, be appointed to confer with the committee above named, and to report to the Commission at its next meeting.

This committee issued a circular to teachers of English in all the colleges concerned, asking for suggestions of change or modification in the existing requirements in English, and received many answers

to their inquiry. In May the committee appointed by the Commission met at Philadelphia with the committee of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, and with a committee of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, and engaged in the preparation of a new scheme of requirements in English. Later the Executive Committee of the Commission approved the action of these three combined committees and called a special meeting in September to consider it. The Commission made a few unimportant changes in the scheme reported by the large conference, and then transmitted it to the colleges, where it resulted in important uniform modifications of the then existing requirements in English. Thus the characteristic methods of the Commission were extended to the Middle States and Maryland.

In 1895 the committee on the requirements in Latin and Greek, appointed in 1893 and continued in 1894, procured a conference of professors of Latin and Greek in all the colleges represented in the Commission, and submitted a new scheme of requirements to this conference. The scheme proposed by the committee was adopted by a large majority in this conference, and subsequently by the Commission. On this occasion the Commission went somewhat beyond its strict function and passed the following vote:

That the proposed preparatory courses in Latin and in Greek be referred to a committee who shall consult such college and school instructors as they may deem advisable and report to the colleges, in behalf of the Commission, a more specific statement of the amounts of the several authors named which pupils may reasonably be expected to read in preparation for the examination.

This action was taken in the interests of those colleges which admit on certificate; for school-teachers must be informed what the colleges expect them to accomplish with their classes, in order that they may certify that their pupils are prepared. Further action was taken on uniform requirements in English to cover the colleges in New England, the Middle States, and Maryland; and lists of books recommended as requirements in English were again adopted. The Commission appointed a committee to consider changes in the requirements in French and in German, and to propose to the Commission such changes as it may find desirable. The New England Association

of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, having represented to the Commission through a committee that closer articulation was desirable between the secondary schools and the higher institutions in New England, and that

the satisfactory completion of any one of the studies embodied in the programs submitted on pages 46 and 47 of the report of the Committee of Ten (National Educational Association), to the extent and in the manner recommended by that Committee, should be allowed to count for admission to colleges and scientific schools,

the Commission, after full discussion, passed the following vote:

That in the sense of the Commission the action requested by the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools is inexpedient, inasmuch as it involves important changes in the college courses.

In 1896 the Commission completed, after much conference and discussion, an improved scheme of requirements for admission in Latin and Greek, and transmitted this scheme to the colleges, with a request for early action. A careful scheme of requirements in French and German having been presented to the Commission by the committee appointed for that purpose, the Executive Committee of the Commission was instructed to invite from the modern-language departments of the several colleges their opinions on the amount and character of the reading expected of candidates and on the expediency of specifying authors in the advanced requirements, and was then empowered to take such further action in the premises as they may deem expedient. The Commission also received from a committee appointed by the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools an elaborate communication concerning the requirements for admission in history and the means of enforcing those requirements; but the Commission took no action on the communication except to transmit it to the colleges for their opinion. In completing its tenth year of existence the Commission pointed out that "a reasonable and tangible degree of improvement in the conditions which it was created to ameliorate has taken place;" that its recommendations had been heeded in colleges outside of New England; and that it had had some good effect

in deepening the conviction that the colleges of New England, and indeed of the entire country, are bound to one another by the ties of a common interest, and that the good of each will be promoted by the increase of a warm and generous sympathy among all.

The labors of the Commission had already resulted in significant benefits to the secondary schools as well as to the colleges.

In 1897 the Commission took up the requirements in mathematics and, following their usual method, called a conference of teachers of mathematics, one from each of the colleges represented in the Commission. The conference formulated certain changes which seemed to them desirable, but expressed a doubt whether the fitting schools could at present meet any further demands from the colleges. The Commission merely commended this report to the attention of the colleges.

Early in 1896 a conference had been held at Columbia University concerning the requirements for entrance to college in history, and within a year the plan proposed by this conference had been adopted by several institutions in the Middle States and, in all its essential respects, by Harvard University. This Association thereupon, in March, 1897, addressed the Commission of the New England Colleges, urging that the proposed new requirements in history be recommended by the Commission to the New England colleges. In reply the Commission voted to transmit to the colleges the results of the New York conference

with its approval of the recommendations which aim at an improvement in the methods of instruction, but with the expression of its opinion that it is undesirable, at the present time, to increase materially the amount of the requirement,

and with the further qualification "that the Commission express no opinion on the subject of options in the elementary requirements in history."

In 1897 another association of teachers—the Massachusetts Association of Classical and High School Teachers—appeared before the Commission with recommendations concerning the requirements for admission to college, the main object of the communication being to state the difficulties experienced by the smaller high schools of the state in meeting the college requirements. The paper presented on behalf of the Association of Classical and High School Teachers contained two especially interesting statements: (1) that

where the same subjects are required for admission to the different colleges or scientific schools there should be uniformity in the amount required and *in the nature of the examination*, and that in the languages the colleges either agree upon the works to be read or, better still, specify only the amount and kind;



and (2) that

the committee believes that evidence of ability to do contemplated work should outweigh in value evidence of the successful accomplishment of specified work.

At the twelfth annual meeting of the Commission in 1898 there was presented a report on the requirements in English which showed that, for the first time, the movement for uniformity had become national; for it embodied the action of a conference in which were represented the Commission of Colleges in New England, the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, the North Central Association of Teachers in English, and the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Southern States. This conference expressed the opinion that the courses of English study should be virtually identical for those students who do and for those who do not expect to go to college, and that the books prescribed for examination should be changed but slightly from year to year, if at all; also that it would be desirable that the examination papers set by the various colleges should be uniform in essential matters. At a second meeting of this conference held in Philadelphia, the conference described what seemed to it a suitable course of study in English throughout the primary- and secondary-school courses. It was obvious that the widening of the area over which uniformity was to be maintained had introduced some new difficulties which had been met by compromises.

At the thirteenth meeting of the Commission, in 1899, the Commission, for the first time, received a direct communication from the English department of a New England college on the subject of the lists of reading matter for entrance to college. The Commission disposed of it by referring it to the standing committee of the requirements on English. In the report of the Commission for this year occurs this statement:

In no department has the influence of the work of the Commission been more marked than in English. It early secured a recognition of its recommendations in many colleges and schools all over the country, and for the past five or six years the improvements which it has introduced, chiefly determined by the principles formulated by Harvard College twenty-five years ago, have been adopted by the associations above named

(the New England Association, the Middle States Association, and the North Central Association). With regard to the requirements in Latin and Greek, it was stated that all the colleges represented in the Commission, except Trinity, Wesleyan, Williams, and Yale, had formally approved the proposed requirements. It appeared, too, in the same report that the recommendations on entrance requirements in Latin and Greek made by the Committee of Twelve of the American Philological Association were in essential harmony with the recommendations of the Commission. At this same meeting the Commission voted that it was desirable to investigate the method of admission to college by certificate, and set on foot an inquiry in that subject. It also discussed the practicability or desirability of a central board to be established by the colleges to conduct examinations for admission at widely scattered places, but found itself unprepared to make any recommendation on that subject.

At the meeting of the Commission in 1900 the main subject of discussion was admission by certificate, and the Commission voted that a committee of three be appointed to gather information upon the method of administering the certificate system by the colleges represented in the Commission which employ it, and to report what, in their judgment, may render it more efficient and uniform. The committee appointed at this meeting made a careful report in 1901, and after discussion the Commission recommended that the colleges using the certificate method establish a board, composed of one member from each college, which shall act on all applications of schools for the privilege of certification, and shall have the power of withdrawing approval from a school, the several colleges to give due notice to the schools they have approved that all privileges of certification will be withdrawn at a given date and that renewals will be granted only by the board. The board thus proposed has since been constituted. This board provides no inspection of schools, but depends, in regard to the capacity and success of each school, on the college record of its graduates already admitted to college. It therefore requires that "a general report of the work of pupils from approved schools for at least one-third of their first year in college shall be made to the board." The board proposes to revise its list of approved schools every three years.

Admission to the freshman classes of universities, colleges, and scientific schools on the certificates of principals of secondary schools, which have been in some manner approved by a faculty or other board representing the higher education, is now the common method of admission in the United States. It is called the "method" of accrediting schools, but no "method" of accrediting schools can be said to be in general use. In practice there is great diversity. Some of the state universities employ an inspector or visitor of high schools on whose report schools may be accredited; others send some professor of the university to examine the organization and work of any secondary school which desires to have its graduates admitted on certificate; in others the applications of those high schools which desire to be placed on the accredited list are considered by the faculty. A school "accredited" by any one respectable institution will generally find its certificate acceptable at a great variety of other institutions. In general, the graduation diplomas of accredited, affiliated, or approved schools are not accepted as evidence of a candidate's fitness, a special certificate from the principal being required for each candidate.

It is obvious that the action of the new board, maintained by ten New England colleges, of which four are for men, three for women, and three coeducational, will have some tendency to promote uniform requirements for admission on certificate, because it will tend to unify on paper the curricula of secondary schools within the range of these colleges, in spite of the provision that the board may approve any school which can prepare candidates on any one of the recognized plans of entering any one of the colleges represented on the board; whereas the method of accrediting or affiliating schools by a state university tends to uniformity of curricula on paper within the limits of the state, but not beyond those limits. Wherever there is a real visitation and examination of schools by university officers, a wholesome influence is undoubtedly exerted by the university on the secondary schools, even when the inspections or examinations of the schools are necessarily brief and infrequent, as in most cases they are. To make a thorough and really valuable examination of a school requires more than one examiner and a stay of several days at the school under examination. The experienced inspector who

gives his whole time to the work of inspecting secondary schools can, however, make useful suggestions concerning the organization and work of a school, and can often help a principal to improve his teaching force by bringing the judgment of an outsider to bear on the school committee or the trustees concerning the unfitness of individual teachers in the school. The New England board, having no money to pay for inspection, has wisely decided to rely solely on the standing of the graduates of each school after they have entered the college or scientific school of their choice. This method is fair toward established schools, but adds somewhat to the difficulties of a new school. Each school should, however, have the opportunity to collate the results of this inquiry for all the boys it sent to college in any given year. A valuable feature in the New England organization is the effective co-operation of ten different institutions through one meeting, or oftener two meetings, a year of the whole board, and still more frequent meetings of the executive committee of the board. Such co-operation tends toward uniform methods and requirements concerning admission by certificate, and is likely to produce in the course of years a common standard for approved secondary schools as regards subjects of study and the time assigned to each subject. In short, whenever a group of colleges or universities unites in a common administrative method, each member of the group will approach the administrative standard of the group. So far as uniformity is concerned, the management of the certificate system by a group of colleges or universities is therefore a decided improvement upon the individual control of admission on certificate by a single institution.

In the year 1900 the method of admission to college by examination was much strengthened by the organization of the College Entrance Examination Board of the Middle States and Maryland to conduct uniform examinations at numerous places scattered all over the United States. In the first year, namely in 1901, these uniform examinations were held at sixty-seven points in the United States, and that number has been largely increased in every year since. The Board prepares the question papers, conducts the examinations, causes the answer papers to be read and marked, and makes a careful record of the results for each individual examined. At the

first, the work of this Board was supported in part by the gift of a generous promoter of the work; but it is clear that the entire work of the Board will ultimately be self-supporting. The Board has now changed its name by omitting the words "of the Middle States and Maryland," and aspires to do a work of national scope. It has been highly successful as regards both the preparation of the questions and the reading of the answers. The standard set by it in each subject has been high and has been well maintained; and it has full control of the range of the examinations in each subject, of the mode of conducting the examinations, and of the mode of reading and grading the answer papers. Persuaded of the efficiency and high value of the system, the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences decided last year to enter heartily into the work of the Board, and to dispense as soon as may be with its June examinations for admission. In regard to producing uniformity, the examination method has heretofore been weak, because there was no such thing as procuring uniformity of administration and standard at examinations conducted at hundreds of different institutions, each working by itself without knowledge of the proceedings of the others. The College Entrance Examination Board provides a perfect cure for this weakness, so that the examination method of admission to college will hereafter be a powerful contributor to uniformity in the requirements made of the secondary schools by the higher institutions; for this uniformity will no longer be in the statement of the requirements on paper, but in the actual application of the requirements in practice. This examination method will have the advantage of being national in its range, paying no attention to state lines or to any groups of states. It will also be a highly co-operative method, uniting many institutions in doing well a far-reaching piece of work for American secondary schools.

It is a question whether the Commission of Colleges in New England will need to be longer maintained. Its methods have been accepted and widely applied; and two well-constituted boards have been established to deal directly with all questions concerning uniformity in requirements for admission to college—one Board for admission by certificate, and another for admission by examination.

The colleges and universities remain free to interpret and apply as they please the results of the labors of these two boards, and even

to disregard or override them. This freedom some may abuse to their own injury; but the better and most successful institutions, recognizing the value for secondary education of uniform standards of attainment by subject, will avail themselves honestly and intelligently of the unifying policies and results of the new boards, both of which have got to work since the twentieth century opened.

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#### DISCUSSION.

DR. JOHN TETLOW: Mr. President, when President Eliot has traversed specific ground, the speaker who follows him does no service to the audience in retraversing the same ground. I shall therefore devote no time to a historical survey of the work that has been done during the last twenty years. When I wrote to President Eliot last summer to ask him what he was going to say about the subject under discussion, he mentioned, among the topics to which he intended to give attention, the increased number of options open to candidates for admission to college, and the increasing number of schools which can therefore fit pupils for college. That is an interesting subject, and I should like to contribute a leaf from local experience upon it.

In the city of Boston there are twelve public secondary schools, of which two are distinctively classical schools—the so-called Latin schools—and ten are high schools. Owing to the increased number of options to which I have referred, secondary schools in Boston that are steadily and rapidly growing in numbers are not the distinctively classical schools, but the high schools. Do not misunderstand me. I am not intending to speak at all of the character of the two kinds of school; I am speaking simply of the extent to which resort is made to them. The high schools are growing rapidly in numbers, and the Latin schools are relatively stationary. In other words, the increase of options in the requirements for admission to college that has taken place during the last twenty years has greatly increased the popularity of the public high schools. This leads me to say a word about the present status of Greek.

The study of Greek has always been a protected industry. (Laughter.) Twenty years ago it was protected in one way, and now it is protected in another. Twenty years ago students could not enter college without preparation in Greek, and that fact made Greek a leading study in all schools that fitted boys or girls for college. At the present time the protec-

tion—and I am speaking especially of Harvard University, for the protection does not exist, at least to the same extent, in other institutions—the protection takes this form: “Candidates who are looking forward to the extended study of English or of any other modern literature are advised to acquire a knowledge of Greek.” There is a little—not much, but a little—truth in the implication conveyed in that recommendation; and I suspect that the members of the Harvard faculty who voted for it smiled when they so voted, very much as the Roman augurs smiled when they inspected the entrails of the victims to discern the will of the gods. I am reminded by it of a story that Dr. Dickinson, formerly secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, used to tell. Dr. Dickinson was an educational philosopher. He had a system of educational philosophy that he could expound off-hand whenever a doubter questioned him. On one occasion he was traveling in a railway carriage with a farmer, to whom he expounded his system. The farmer’s comment was: “There is a sprinkling of truth in what you say.” Now, there is perhaps a “sprinkling of truth” in the implication that a knowledge of Greek is essential to a proper appreciation of English and other modern literatures; and the masters of high schools have eagerly availed themselves of the support afforded by this recommendation of the Harvard catalogue, in their efforts to get Greek included in their school programs. They want students of Greek in their schools for two reasons. Students who are intending to enter college with preparation in Greek belong to a somewhat select class. They exercise a refining and elevating influence in the school with which they are connected. That is one reason. There is another reason, of a quite different character, which illustrates more clearly the protective attitude maintained toward the study of Greek.

Harvard University credits elementary Greek with four points, whereas it credits elementary German with only two, although in the preparatory schools approximately the same time is devoted to elementary German as to elementary Greek. So it has come to be thought that it is somewhat easier to get boys and girls into college by the Greek path than by the path which may be substituted for it, because Greek gets so generous recognition in points. Now, perhaps it may be inferred from what I have said that I deprecate this attitude of Harvard University toward Greek. I do not. I hope it will continue to prevail, for the reason that in the present age I do not see how Greek is going to survive as a study in the preparatory schools unless this protection is extended to it.

One of the things accomplished—indeed, the most serviceable thing accomplished—by the agitation for uniformity that took place twenty

years ago was the breaking down of the barrier which then existed between teachers in colleges and teachers in secondary schools. That was the most serviceable thing accomplished by the movement, because all the good results that flowed from it were due to that. Twenty years ago the colleges dominated the secondary schools. At that time it was thought an impertinence for a teacher in a secondary school to offer suggestions to the colleges as to what the nature of the preparation for collegiate work should be. So strong was the feeling of discontent and of resentment produced by this relation that it culminated at a meeting of the Massachusetts Classical and High School Teachers' Association in the appointment, by Mr. Frank A. Hill, who was at that time the president of the association, of a committee of three members to see what could be done in the direction of breaking down the existing barrier. Dr. William C. Collar, then as now the accomplished head-master of the Roxbury Latin School, Dr. Ray Greene Huling, the efficient secretary of this organization almost from the beginning, and I were appointed on that committee. Among the important qualifications of the committee for their work were these: they had personally felt the evil effects of the separation complained of; they were eager to enter upon the work of doing away with it; and they were ready, at whatever cost of time and effort, to work patiently and tactfully until they should have attained the objects which they were appointed to accomplish. President Eliot will remember that I wrote him a letter immediately after the appointment of the committee, explaining the situation at length and telling him how we were going to work to try to improve it; and the result of that letter was that he invited Mr. Collar and me to his house to luncheon. After we had broken bread together, we talked the matter over in the familiar way which social intercourse promotes. I wrote a letter to President Robinson, of Brown University, the result of which was that I received an invitation to go to Providence to take tea with him (laughter), and we talked the matter over in the same way there. In that social and persuasive way we worked for about three months (laughter), and we gradually learned to our surprise and delight that the spirit of hostility which we were striving to overcome no longer existed. In fact, the success that attended our efforts was such as to convince me that, when the time for a movement is ripe, and the movement is guided by those who are thoroughly in earnest, failure is impossible.

In making arrangements for the meeting which resulted in the formation of this Association, we took care that subjects of vital interest to both colleges and secondary schools should be on the program, and that representative men from both classes of institutions should be invited to speak



on those subjects. That we succeeded will be apparent when I remind you that President Porter, of Yale University, made the first important address on the subject, "How Can the Preparatory Schools Co-operate More Effectively with the Colleges?" The discussion was opened by Mr. E. H. Cutler, then head-master of the Newton High School. The second subject was, "Is Any Greater Degree of Uniformity in Requisitions for Admission to College Practicable?" The paper on that subject was given by Dr. Bancroft, of the Phillips Andover Academy, and the discussion was opened by President Eliot. The next paper was on the question, "What Are Some of the Most Prominent and Prevailing Defects in the Preparation of Candidates for College?" This paper was prepared by Professor Fay, of Tufts College, and Mr. Collar opened the discussion on it. The fourth paper was on the question, "Under What Conditions Might Admission to College by Certificate be permitted?" It was contributed by Dr. Keep, of the Free Academy of Norwich, and the discussion on it was opened by President Robinson, of Brown University. But we did not end our work with the preparation of a program. We hoped and thought that something permanent might come of what we modestly called the proposed conference, and so we asked Dr. Huling, one of the members of the committee, to prepare a constitution: He did so, and at the right time this constitution was presented and adopted, and the Association was then and there formed. Moreover, a series of resolutions was passed at that first meeting; and, when I quote the fifth of these resolutions, you will recognize that it was even more specifically prophetic of what has since been accomplished than the extract which Dr. Gallagher quoted at the beginning of this session from one of the papers read at the conference. The resolution was:

*Resolved*, That this conference urge upon the colleges co-operation and comity, either in accepting each other's certificates of examination, or in establishing generally an examining board whose duty it shall be to set papers, conduct examinations, and issue certificates on their behalf, which certificates shall be good in any college in the syndicate.

I think—though I may be wrong—that President Eliot was the author of that resolution. At any rate, a committee, consisting of Dr. Bancroft, Mr. Collar, and Mr. Tetlow, was appointed to go to Hanover to present the resolutions to the Association of Colleges of New England, which in that year met at Dartmouth College, and to urge on that body the adoption of the recommendations embodied in them. I shall always look back with satisfaction on the organization of this Association as the best piece of constructive educational work that I have ever had the honor to have a

share in. Perhaps I ought to make an exception of the work of the Committee of Ten, but my share in that was quite unimportant.

Now, honorable as the record of achievement of this Association has been, I think perhaps its strongest claim to distinction is the fact that it has become the parent of lustier offspring than itself. Of course, I refer to the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, for from that association has come into existence within the last few years the College Entrance Examination Board. Our Association, although it had the foresight to recognize what was needed, has not had the courage to give practical realization to its foresight and its convictions. That honor has been left by the parent to its offspring.

I have admired not only the boldness manifested by the Middle States Association in the establishment of the College Entrance Examination Board, but also its great practical wisdom and its marvelous self-restraint. The College Entrance Examination Board has founded its definitions of requirements for admission on the recommendations of national boards of experts that have commanded general approval—the only possible foundation on which such requirements could have been successfully established. When the College Entrance Examination Board did that, it did away at a stroke with what President Butler once spoke of as the “academic impertinence” of heads of university departments who presume by the examinations they set, to fasten upon the secondary schools of the country their own idiosyncrasies as the proper subjects to be taught. (Laughter.) In the second place, the College Entrance Examination Board has respected the individuality of the colleges. It sets the questions, it rates the answers, and then turns over to the several colleges the results for the colleges to deal with them as they please. That makes it possible for the individual colleges to develop according to their local possibilities, and yet, at the same time, it silently and effectively points the way to a real uniformity in essentials. In the third place, the College Entrance Examination Board has included representatives of the secondary schools on the board itself and among the examiners appointed by the board. I know that that step has been severely criticised. It has been supposed to be attended with serious dangers. But whatever dangers do attend it are to be overcome; they are not to be yielded to. That element in the organization of the College Entrance Examination Board is vital, and the board is wholly right in insisting that it shall not be sacrificed.

Again, the work of the College Entrance Examination Board has been characterized, not by rigidity, but by mobility. The board recognizes that education is progressive, not stationary. Let me give you an example.

I am a teacher of Greek in a preparatory school. For many years I have had to prepare pupils for the so-called advanced examination in Greek. The kind of test that I have become accustomed to is one that appeals to me as both sound and stimulating. It consists in the selection of a passage from Homer to be translated at sight, and of questions on the passage set for translation. Now, the excellent feature of that kind of examination is that the teacher is left free to select the text that shall be the basis of his work with his class from all parts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He is therefore under every inducement to vary his work from year to year and so enlarge his scholarship; and, of course, if a teacher enlarges his scholarship, he inevitably improves his teaching. Now, when I began to fear that I should come under the domination of the College Entrance Examination Board, I consulted its requirements for admission in Greek, and I saw that the examinations to be set were based on the first three books of the *Iliad* and on Books VI, VII, and VIII—a more elementary examination on the first three and a more advanced examination on the second three. I said to myself at once: “There, my freedom is cut off! When I come under the domination of that board, I shall have to read with my pupils, year after year, the first three books, and the sixth, seventh, and eighth books. My scholarship will be impaired, and my efficiency as a teacher will suffer.” But lo and behold the last report of the secretary of the College Entrance Examination Board reveals that the nature of the examination has been changed, that the advanced examination will be based hereafter on a passage taken from any part of the Homeric poems, and that therefore I am in no danger of having my future efficiency as a teacher impaired. (Laughter.) This illustration shows that the work of the College Entrance Examination Board is not stereotyped.

The board evidently welcomes suggestion and criticism and it is wisely responsive to such criticism as embodies the worthiest ideals. Therefore I look forward hopefully to the prospect of coming under its influence.

I have now been engaged in the responsible, but delightful, work of preparing pupils for college for almost forty years; and, as I stand at the threshold of the fifth decade, I look forward, as the result of what we have achieved through our co-operative efforts, with even greater satisfaction and hopefulness than I felt when I entered upon my work with the enthusiasm of youth.

DR. WILLIAM C. COLLAR, head-master of the Roxbury Latin School: Mr. President, coming here today I felt happy to think that for once I should have no responsibility whatsoever for the success of this meeting.

I could listen to President Eliot, whom I always try to hear when I can, and to Dr. Tetlow, and simply enjoy myself. I have not prepared anything to say, but one or two remarks that have been made have suggested to me certain things that I may give expression to.

I think President Eliot, if I understood him in the latter part of his paper, suggested that perhaps the work of this Association had been done.

PRESIDENT ELIOT: The Commission.

MR. COLLAR: President Eliot says the work of the Commission, not the work of this Association. That reminds me, Mr. President, nevertheless, that about a year ago you asked me if I thought that there was really anything more for this Association to do, and I answered rashly—and I now think wrongly—that I did not think there was. But I am persuaded that there remains a great deal to do. We have existed for twenty years, and President Eliot and Dr. Tetlow have reviewed the history of the Association and shown that we have succeeded in one respect in bringing about a considerable measure of uniformity on paper in the requirements for admission to college. But twenty years ago, when Dr. Tetlow and Dr. Huling and myself assisted in launching this Association, I had a dream and a hope—which, I am sorry to say, have not been realized—that this Association would succeed probably in bringing the schools and the colleges in heart and purpose and aim near together. I am sorry to say it, but my conviction is today that the chasm that separates the schools and the colleges is as wide and as deep as ever it was. It is true that there has been a measure of co-operation in regard to uniformity of requirements but I for one am still impressed with the feeling that there is no close unity in the hearts of the two classes of institutions. It is true that there have been many conferences. I have assisted, in the French sense, at a good many conferences with college men, and I am bound to say that their reception of us schoolmasters has always been gracious, polite, and respectful. They have listened to our representations with a certain benignant condescension. (Laughter.) But I have always had the feeling that their real attitude was one of partial amusement, of a certain interest, of a disposition to grant, if they could, something, but not very much; and I think not very much has been granted. Dr. Tetlow said that twenty years ago the schools were dominated by the colleges. I think they were never dominated by the colleges so much as at the present time, and I think that that must be known, if it is a fact, to most of the teachers who are here. The colleges practically determine—they do determine, in the end—both the content and the form of the knowledge that they will make a condition of admission to college. They do sometimes alter the requirements in

some grave matter, but, so far as I know, without any consultation with schoolmasters. I have never known—notwithstanding they have held conferences—I have never known them to ask for the approval of schoolmasters of changes that they proposed.

Now, it may seem a little presumptuous that we schoolmasters should ask for a partial, a limited, veto on the conclusions of the colleges in regard to admission requirements, but I think myself it is not an unreasonable thing to ask. Let me illustrate, by a concrete, though perhaps rather trivial, example, what I mean, in a measure, by the dominance of the colleges which Dr. Tetlow thinks is removed, and which I think is just as vigorous as it ever was. It occurred, I think, about three years ago to an instructor in Harvard College—I have no doubt a very well-meaning young man—that it would be a fine thing if the boys coming up to college could be ready to solve literal equations in algebra—equations in which there should be, no figures, but all letters; and accordingly it was done. Accordingly, two hundred schools at once had to turn—I am told by mathematical teachers—about three months of the instruction in algebra to the solving of literal equations, so as to get the boys able to pass the examination. That illustrates in a very small degree what I say.

Let me return, for a moment, to this matter of conferences. I am thankful for every conference that is held. President Eliot, soon after he entered upon the presidency of Harvard, set this country an example of the best sort. He asked some twenty head-masters, if I remember right, over to Harvard College and invited us to spend the entire day—lunching in the meantime with him (laughter)—considering the requirements for admission to college; and I know that those discussions had a very great influence, and that the results of that discussion were put into shape in the requirements for admission. I wish his example had been heartily followed by men not so great as he. I have attended, I think, four or five conferences at Harvard College within two years.

Now, I will not complain, but I want to say that it seemed to me significant that, as I remembered those conferences afterward, if the heads of the departments did not appear, that on one or two occasions full professors were present, but they assumed a somewhat apologetic tone because they were present. At one of those conferences it was demonstrated—if anything could be demonstrated, as it seemed to me—that the requirements in advanced German were altogether too difficult, that they amounted to about a year's more work than the preparatory schools could do. What is the answer? The answer is a paper set last June; I have not seen it, but I have been told that it was the hardest paper that was ever set. I have no complaint to make. All the boys that I sent up to the advanced exami-

nation in German passed with "A;" they consisted of one small boy. (Laughter.) I could not help thinking of the old stories of the Hebrews making bricks for the Egyptians. They were required to deliver a tale of brick, and when they cried out that it was too much, their taskmasters said: "Oh, but we will not diminish your tasks. We will take away the straw, and you shall go and find straw where you can." So I am obliged to say that when we cried out, "This is too much, gentlemen," they said, "Go you and find brains wherewith to meet these requirements." (Laughter and applause.)

Now, it is not good that this dominance of the colleges—or of Harvard College, for we all mean Harvard College when we talk about the colleges in this region—it is not good that this dominance should exist. It is not good for the colleges, it is not good for the schools. It has come about with no set purpose. I do not blame anybody at all. But it happens that the men, I think, who set the papers generally are young men who are fine scholars, who have had no experience as schoolmasters, who do not know how difficult it is for the average boy preparing for college to grasp subjects that he must get up to be examined in; and they do not know what a power of resistance against the entrance of knowledge into the mind a great many boys possess. (Laughter.) It is really very extraordinary.

Now, what has been one result of this unfortunate dominance of which I complain? It has been that Harvard has finally screwed up the requirements for admission beyond what is reasonable and beyond what is possible to be met. Now, I know President Eliot will be ready to say: "You are *particeps criminis*. You answered, when requested to write to the faculty, that you thought this and that subject might be added to the requirements." I admit it, but I was not prepared for such an increase. I was prepared—and I was willing—to recommend an advance in some subjects of 10 or 15, or even 25 per cent.; but I was not prepared for a 50 per cent. advance. And there, in my judgment, was the enormous mistake that Harvard College made. It did invite schoolmasters to express their judgment about this and that, and they got from me a recommendation that the Greek requirements should be increased. Perhaps Mr. Bradbury recommended that the mathematical requirements should be increased.

MR. BRADBURY: No, I didn't. (Laughter.)

MR. COLLAR: Well, you didn't want a harder examination than your books would qualify the boys to pass in. But some did. And another teacher wanted a little increase in history; and all these things were moved along the line; and the result is about 50 per cent. in advance of what the requirements were some years ago.

Now, this is a great evil. The schoolmasters are hurried and worried. The boys feel driven, and feel justly that their rights to a certain amount of freedom are invaded and trespassed upon. The parents protest and complain. Into the schoolroom have come the hurry and the whirl and the bustle of the outer world. It is no longer that serene absorption and digestion of knowledge which was once possible. In my own school once preparation for Harvard was an incident in the course of study. Now we do all we can to get the bare requirements, and we cannot do it, and I feel hurried and worried, as I say. Now, if there were really, as I think there ought to be, a hearty co-operation between the colleges and the schools, we should come a great deal nearer together, we should learn from each other. and a far better condition of things would be brought about.

Now, I do not want to speak in a discouraging way. I am at heart hopeful. I am hopeful because, though I complain of the hard-heartedness of college men, I do not complain of their intelligence, and my hope rests upon their intelligence. (Laughter.) Just as quickly as they see thoroughly that there is an absolute solidarity of interest and of aim between the schools and the colleges, there will be a great movement in advance; and so long as President Eliot is at the head of Harvard College—and I hope he will be for many, many years—I feel sure that there is a man at the helm of the greatest institution who will promote this union with all his power. After he has gone, I will not say. I have no particular interest in what happens after he has gone, for then I shall not be a schoolmaster. I shall not have any college examinations to face. I shall be “where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.” (Laughter and applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: You see how history repeats itself. In the very first meeting one of the gentlemen who is here present today made this remark: “When the college raises the standard, it always raises mischief.”

PROFESSOR WILLIAM CAREY POLAND, of Brown University: I wish to say but a word, Mr. President. I wish, first of all, to thank President Eliot very heartily for the very comprehensive, full, and interesting sketch which he has given of the progress of the work which has been carried on at the instigation of this Association, and through the instrumentality of the Commission which he was so instrumental in founding, and the policy of which has been very much shaped by the initial impulse which he gave to it. He has raised a question which is, of course, at the present moment one of vital interest to the Commission—as to the desirability of the further continuance of the Commission. I do not rise to express any opinion upon

that subject at all, but merely to remind the members of this Association, if I may, through you, Mr. Chairman, that the Commission has passed at its last vote a resolution by which it practically has concluded to remain inactive for two years from the time of the last meeting which it held (which was in April, 1903), and to see whether in that time there is a need of its active resumption of its functions. Therefore, in April, 1905, it will practically be decided—and it will be decided, of course, very largely by whatever may happen in the meantime between now and then as an indication whether the work of the Commission is needed at all. I simply wish to speak of that, so that those who are here may remember that if they have an opinion on the subject, if they have a view that the Commission has work to do, and if they have work in mind that the Commission ought to do, there is only this interval between now and April, 1905, during which it can be brought before the Commission. Of course, if it should prove that the Commission is needed, it will probably continue as long as it is needed.

PRESIDENT ELIOT: I am sorry to say that I am obliged to go to Cambridge to attend another meeting shortly, so I want to take a moment to see if I cannot cheer up Mr. Collar a little.

In the first place, he is perfectly right in saying that this matter of raising the requirements for admission to Harvard College is a question of the intelligence of the college faculty. They have no vicious motives whatever. The question is whether they could correctly estimate the comparative difficulty of the existing and the proposed requirements for admission. At the time of the last action of the faculty on this subject, that particular question, "Are these new requirements for admission more difficult than the former? Will they require more time and more work than the former?" was most carefully considered over and over again, and the college faculty was not intelligent enough to perceive that the new requirements would be more difficult. Mr. Collar thinks it has turned out that they are more difficult, and he gives a high estimate of the increased difficulty—50 per cent.

Let me first point out what the source is of this increase—if there really is an increase of 50 per cent. or anything like it. It is in the departmental organization of both the college and the secondary school, and in the eagerness of each department, both in school and college, to elevate the standard of work in that department. That is the root of the matter. Schoolmasters who love Greek come together with the college professors in Greek and resolve that they will get more and more Greek into the



requirements for admission. History does exactly the same thing, also mathematics, etc. They all do that thing. Now, I cannot but think that the departmental organization of the colleges and the schools is right and wise, and leads to a great deal more good than harm. But if harm there be of the sort that Mr. Collar has been describing, there is the source of it.

On the question whether this harm has really been done, I can contribute two facts, I think. Harvard University ought to suffer from this 50 per cent. increase in the requirements for admission, if any institution does; for we try to live up to our requirements. Now, as matter of fact, as many boys are going into Harvard College as ever. They do not seem to be kept out by these requirements. And another thing: they are going in younger. Now, it is queer, if the requirements are 50 per cent. higher, that the boys can be fitted younger. That would be rather a curious combination of facts. It may be true, nevertheless. I suggest these facts as ground of hope that the requirements will prove not to have been materially increased.

But, further, Harvard College is going into the College Entrance Examination Board, and going in thoroughly. It means to take hearty part in the work of that board. But the standards of that board are not going to be local; they are going to be general. They will, however, continue to be influenced by the departmental organization of education. Therefore I hope that this Association will by no means drop its strong interest in this subject which we have been discussing this afternoon, and I am glad to take this opportunity to say that I should be the last person to suggest in any way—as my friend, Mr. Collar, understood me to suggest—that this Association should wind up its affairs. I only suggested that possibly the Commission on College Requirements for Admission need not be longer maintained. Professor Poland has put that matter before you perfectly. (Applause.)

DR. COLLAR: I should like to bring forward one fact in support of my contention that the present requirements of Harvard College are more than can well be met. Unfortunately, I have not looked up the statistics specially, but speaking from the general impression, which I think can not be far wrong, I should say that about one-third of the candidates for admission to Harvard College pass a satisfactory examination, and two-thirds do not. Of the two-thirds, about one-half fail entirely and the other half get in on about the lowest marks possible. Now, that is a statement which, I think, in the gross, is correct, but it can be verified by anybody by looking at the president's yearly report, the communication from the dean with regard to the annual examinations, and the credits that are given, and

the number rejected, and so on. I think that is a fact as significant as the fact which President Eliot has mentioned.

Let me say, while referring to the advanced German, that is merely one illustration, and I do not attach any special importance to this circumstance that I am going to relate. A teacher in the English High School in Boston, where I understand German is excellently taught, said to me lately: "We sent up six boys to the advanced German examination. One of them was a brilliant boy, and the others were good scholars, and of the six one entered on "D"—the lowest possible mark, which is about 40 per cent.—and the other five were rejected."